

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

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LONDON FOR NEA DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY SOBER

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, PFOR, IN, SK

SUBJECT: SIKKIM

REF: NEW DELHI 4921 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: SIKKIM'S SLECTORATE IS CASTING BALLOTS APRIL 14
ON THE TWO QUESTIONS OF THE ASSOCIATE STATE'S FUTURE
STATUS AND THE CONTINUANCE OF THE INSTITUTION OF THE
CHOGYAL. WHILE THE KAZI AND HIS SIKKIM CONGRESS
ASSOCIATES HAVE BEEN CAMPAIGNING ON BOTH QUESTIONS,
THE CHOGYAL REMAINS SECLUDED IN HIS PALACE, ALLEGEDLY
"ILL WITH THE FLU". THE GOI HAS "DEPLORED" THE PAKISTANI
STATEMENT ON SIKKIM, WHIHC IN ITS VIEW EVIDENCES THE
PAKISTANI ATTITUDE OF ATTEMPTING TO FOSTER CONFRONTATION
AND SUSPICION IN THE SUBCONTINENT. END SUMMARY.

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1. SPECIAL POLL IN SIKKIM - A REFERENDUM ON THE SIKKIM ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE ABOLITION OF THE INSTITUTION OF THE CHOGYAL AND DECLARING THAT SIKKIM "SHALL HENCEFORTH BE A CONSTITUENT UNIT OF INDIA" IS BEING HELD APRIL 14. SIKKIM'S ELECTORATE OF SOME 95,000 HAS A CHOICE OF CASTING BALLOTS EITHER IN A PINK BOX (PRO-ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION) OR A WHITE BOX (AGAINST THE RESOLUTION) AT FIFTY-SEVEN POLLING BOOTHS THROUGHOUT THE ASSOCIATE STATE. THE RESULTS OF THIS HASTILY SCHEDULED POLL WILL REPORTEDLY BE MADE AVAILABLE APRIL 15.

2. THE KAZI'S ACTIVITIES - THE CHIEF MINISTER, KAZI DORJI, WAS SAID BY THE INDIAN PRESS TO HAVE PRESIDED OVER THE LARGEST PUBLIC MEETING IN SIKKIM HISTORY AT SINGTAM APRIL 11, WHERE OVER 15,000 SIKKIMESE REPORTEDLY "ENDORSED THE ASSEMBLY'S RESOLUTION". ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, ONE OF THE SIKKIMESE CONGRESS SPEAKERS URGED THAT SIKKIM SHOULD UNITE WITH INDIA BECAUSE IT "CAN NEVER BE SOVEREIGN," NOT BEING QUALIFIED IN FINANCE, DEFENSE OR COMMUNICATIONS, AND "COULD HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH NEPAL", SINCE NEPAL HAD NO SYMPATHY FOR SIKKIM IN 1973M THE DELHI PRESS HAS ALSO PICKED UP REPORTS THAT THE KAZI AND FOREIGN MINISTER CHAVAN MAY SOON MEET, PERHAPS IN CALCUTTA.

3. THE CHOGYAL'S ACTIVITIES - ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS FROM GANGTOK, THE CHOGYAL IS ALLEGEDLY CONFINED TO BED IN HIS PALACE "WITH A SLIGHT TEMPERATURE AND A TOUCH OF FLU". HIS OLDEST SON (CROWN PRINCE), HIS PERSONAL SECRETARY J.T. DENSAPA, FORMER AUDITOR-GENERAL RASAILLY, AND A LEGAL ADVISER ARE STAYING WITH HIM. OFFICIALS IN DELHI, HAVING TAKEN NOTE OF HOPE COOKE'S CHARGE THAT HER HUSBAND IS BEING HELD PRISONER, HAVE TOLD THE PRESS THAT THE CHOGYAL IS FREE TO MOVE AROUND GANGTOK AND IS PROTECTED BY THE INDIAN ARMY. HOWEVER, A STORY IN THE INDIAN EXPRESS APRIL 14 SPECULATES THAT THE CHOGYAL MAY HAVE CONCLUDED THERE IS A SECURITY RISK IN DOING SO AFTER THE CROWN PRINCE "WAS NEARLY AMBUSHED BY MEN IN A JEEP AND ESCAPED NARROWLY" WHEN HE CAME OUT OF THE PALACE ON A MOTORCYCLE "LAST SUNDAY" (PRESUMABLE APRIL 6). THE DELHI PRESS REPORTS THAT AMMUNITION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND EIGHTEEN "LETHAL WEAPONS" WERE SEIZED FROM THE PALACE IN A SEARCH CONDUCTED APRIL 10 BY THE SIKKIM POLICE, ASSISTED BY INDIAN TROOPS.

4. GOI REACTION TO PAKISTANI STATEMENT - AN MEA SPOKESMAN REACTED SHARPLY APRIL 13 TO A PAKISTANI FOREIGN MINISTERY STATEMENT (PUBLISHED HERE THE SAME DAY) THAT INDIA HAD ANNEXED SIKKIM "BY FORCE". THE UNNAMED MEA SPOKESMAN,

ALLOWING HIMSELF TO BE DIRECTLY QUOTED BY INDIAN JOURNALISTS AT A PRESS BRIEFING, SAID THE GOI WAS NOT SURPRISED AT PAKISTAN'S ATTEMPTS TO MISCONSTRUE THE EVENTS IN SIKKIM, THAT "PAKISTAN'S OWN RECORD OF DEALING WITH FORMER PRINCELY STATES IS AMPLY DEMONSTRATED BY ITS UNILATERAL ACTION IN HUNZA". AND THAT ITS COMMENTS ON SIKKIM INDICATED IT HAD NOT GIVEN UP ITS ATTITUDE OF ATTEMPTING TO FOSTER CONFRONTATION AND SUSPICION IN THE SUBCONTINENT AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY, EVEN TO THE EXTENT OF INTERFERING IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF OTHERS AS IN THE PRESNET INSTANCE. THE MEA OFFICIAL WAS QUOTED IN CONCLUSION AS HAVING SAID: "WE DEPLORE THIS ATTITUDE AND WE HAVE ALWAYS REFRAINED FROM COMMENTING ON PAKISTAN'S OWN INTERNAL AFFAIRS THOUGH THERE IS MUCH THAT COULD BE SAID ABOUT THEM". THERE IS NO OFFICIAL TEXT OF THE GOI REACTION TO THE PAKISTANI STATEMENT NOR HAS IT MADE PUBLIC ANY REACTIONS TO PEKING'S MOST RECENT CRITICISM OF INDIAN POLICY IN SIKKIM, WHICH HAS BEEN PUBLISHED IN THE INDIAN PRESS.

5. THE CPI'S VIEWS - THE CPI DAILY PATRIOT APRIL 14 CARRIED A LENGTHY COMMENTARY (AUTHORED BY THE PSEUDONYMOUS NARAD) CHARACTERIZING THE CHOGYAL AS "AN AMERICAN GADFLY OUT TO BE-SMIRCH INDIA'S NAME". HIS GAME -- ACCORDING TO THE PATRIOT -- IS TO FOLLOW THE STRATEGY OF "HIS MASTERS IN WASHINGTON PACKED BY PEKING" AND TO "CREATE DESTABILIZATION IN ONE OF THE STRATEGICALLY SENSITIVE SPOTS". THE PATRIOT CONCLUDED THAT THE CHOGYAL'S REMOVAL HAD ASSUMED URGENCY BECAUSE OF CHINESE INTRIGUES IN NEIGHBORING BHUTAN IN WHICH THE US IS CONNIVING.
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